

REMARKS

Claims 1-31 are pending in this application. Claims 1 and 30 - 31 have been canceled. Claims 2-6 and 14-15 have been amended. Accordingly, claims 2-29 are currently under consideration. No new matter has been added.

I. Rejection under 35 U.S.C. 102(e)

Claims 1-5, 15, and 30-31 have been rejected as being anticipated by Drill et al. (US Patent No. 6,572,439).

Claims 1 and 30-31 have been canceled. Accordingly the rejection of claims 1 and 30-31 is moot.

Claims 2-5 and 15 have been amended to depend from currently amended claim 6 which has been amended to be in independent form including all the limitation of the base claim. The Examiner had found claim 6 allowable but had objected to claim 6 for being dependent on a rejected base claim. Accordingly, claims 2-5 and 15 should be allowed for at least the reason that they depend on an allowable base claim.

II. Rejection under 35 U.S.C. 103(a)

Claim 14 was rejected as being unpatentable over Drill et al. in view of Misra et al. (US Patent Publication No. 2002/0115383).

Claim 14 has been amended to depend from claim 6. Accordingly, claim 14 should be allowed for at least the reason that it depends on an allowable base claim.

III. Allowable subject matter

The Examiner has allowed claims 25-30.

Claims 6-13 were objected to as being dependent on a rejected base claim but would otherwise be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Claim 6 has been amended to be in independent form including all the limitation of the base claim. Claims 7-13 depend from claim 6. Accordingly the objection should be withdrawn and claim 6-13 should be allowed.

The Examiner failed to comment on claims 16-24, thus the Applicant assumes that claims 16-24 are allowable and should be allowed.

In view of the above, each of the presently pending claims in this application is believed to be in immediate condition for allowance. Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to withdraw the outstanding rejection of the claims and to pass this application to issue. If it is determined that a telephone conference would expedite the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number given below.

In the event the U.S. Patent and Trademark office determines that an extension and/or other relief is required, applicant petitions for any required relief including extensions of time and authorizes the Commissioner to charge the cost of such petitions and/or other fees due in connection with the filing of this document to Deposit Account No. 03-1952 referencing docket no.577182000100. However, the Commissioner is not authorized to charge the cost of the issue fee to the Deposit Account.

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